

# THE HEALTH CONNECTION

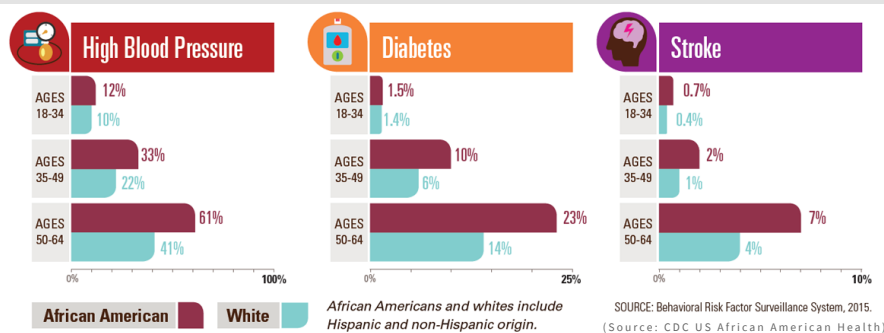
ABILENE TAYLOR-COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT



## DYK: African Americans are at a higher risk of dying at early ages from many chronic conditions?

Data shows that social factors and increased health risks have a greater impact on African Americans at a younger age.

*The Public Health sector continues work to decrease disparities and barriers and promote equal and equitable health care access and opportunities for everyone. (Learn about Health Equity on Page 3)*



## DR. WILLIAM BUTLER

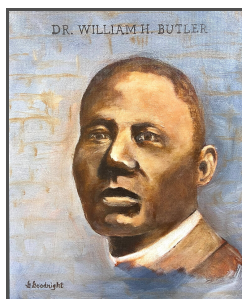
FIRST BLACK PHYSICIAN IN ABILENE, TX

Black History month is a time to look at our past, present, and future as a community; It is a time to celebrate the triumphs and recognize the struggles of all Black men and women throughout history.

As we celebrate triumphs we at ATCPHD would like to honor the many Black medical pioneers who were key in bettering our healthcare system.

One such trailblazer was a local Abilene man, **Dr. William Butler**.

In 1910, Dr. Butler received his degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, one of the few institutions



**Dr. William Butler Portrait**  
By Dr. Gary Goodnight  
Oil on Canvas

*Dr. Goodnight painted this portrait of Dr. Butler to honor him and his service to our community.*

in the U.S. to issue medical degrees to Black students at the time. He began practicing medicine in 1914, and primarily cared for Black patients, though he also treated White and Hispanic patients as well.

In 1932, Dr. Butler moved to Abilene and opened his practice, out of his home, at 701 Mesquite street. He became the first Black physician in Abilene and served the community until his retirement in 1945.

Suffice to say, he stayed very busy as he also offered dental and pharmaceutical services.

Dr. Butler not only created a more inclusive healthcare landscape, but he inspired his own son to follow in his footsteps to become a physician. He truly paved the way for Black men and women to pursue jobs in the medical field as well as other leadership positions within our community.

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Abilene Taylor County**  
**Public Health District**



## WIC WELLNESS: BREASTFEEDING GOOD FOR BABY & FOR MOM

LEARN MORE ONLINE AT [TEXASWIC.ORG/BREASTFEEDING](https://www.texaswic.org/breastfeeding)

**Did you know that breastmilk is so much more than a food source to your baby? Breastmilk is best for baby and it changes for their needs as they age and develop.**

### PROTECTION FOR BABY

#### BREASTMILK REDUCES THE RISK THAT BABY WILL HAVE:

- Ear infections
- Diarrhea
- Stomach problems
- Childhood leukemia
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Obesity
- (SIDS) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome



### BENEFITS FOR MOM

#### BURN UP TO 600 CALORIES DAILY

Return to pre-pregnancy weight faster

#### LOWERS SOME HEALTH RISKS

Lowers risk of arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Releases hormones that help you feel calmer.

### OTHER

- Easily Digested
- Free, fresh, safe
- Convenient! Warm and always ready

## A MESSAGE FROM DR. GOODNIGHT

### WHY I CHOOSE TO BE VACCINATED

A 60-some year old male rancher suffered a puncture wound from a rusty barbed-wire fence. A week later, I was helping with his ICU care from a jaw-breaking tetanus infection. A current **tetanus vaccination** would have prevented this.

A hospital consultation to evaluate a patient with severe earache, dizziness, loss of hearing in affected ear, unilateral facial paralysis and a blistering rash on the affected ear. Ramsey Hunt Syndrome from herpes zoster (shingles) was diagnosed. A **shingles vaccination** would have prevented this.

Numerous surgical tracheotomy procedures performed because of prolonged respiratory failure with ventilator dependency from influenza, pneumonia or Covid infections that may have been prevented with proper vaccinations.

“ I choose to be current in my vaccinations to protect my family, my patients and myself. - DR. GARY GOODNIGHT ”

As a pharmacist and physician, I have been involved with healthcare for over 48 years. This career path allowed me to study the indications and pharmacology of medications, understand how vaccines support our own complex immune system and when to prescribe and recommend treatment. I learned early about the pioneers of the past in the development of vaccines (Edward Jenner—1796 smallpox, Louis Pasteur—1885 rabies) and the dawn of bacteriology. During these 48 years, many of the

commonly used vaccines and antibiotics of today were studied and “invented”.

The **Hepatitis B vaccine** became required for operating surgeons and staff to prevent accidental needle sticks from becoming a life threatening infection. The year 2012 saw a **whooping cough (pertussis)** resurgence requiring booster revaccination of physicians and staff locally and across the nation.

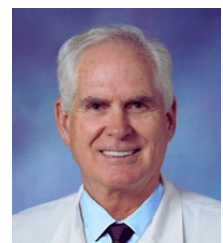
In helping oversee the Abilene Taylor County Public Health Districts federal and state supported Texas Vaccination For Children program, I have learned how those children not previously able to obtain a vaccine are receiving care. The VFC program was initiated in 1994. Nationwide it has been estimated to have prevented 419 million illnesses and an estimated 936,000 childhood deaths (1994-2018). Twenty different vaccines are available through this amazing program.

As I have aged, various boosters have been required and new vaccines developed to help keep me healthy, active and caring for patients. I choose to be current in my vaccinations to protect my family, my patients and myself.

I hope each of you will review your personal vaccination needs with your healthcare provider for a healthy and active life.

**Stay healthy by living healthy.**

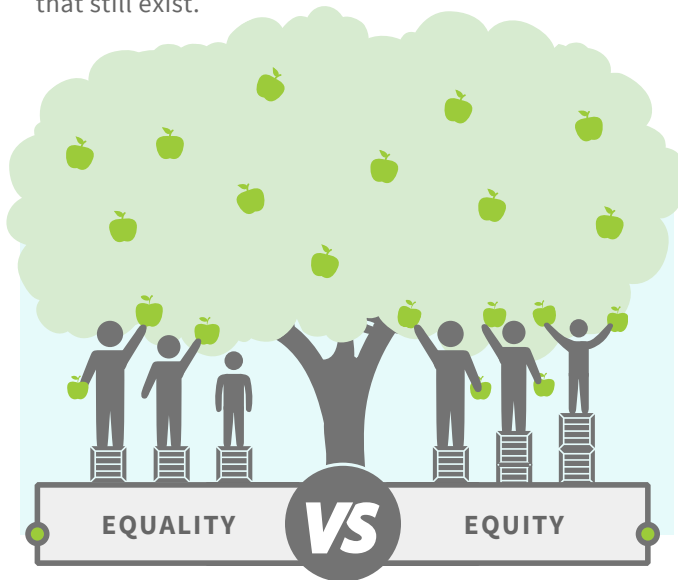
**DR. GARY GOODNIGHT**  
HEALTH AUTHORITY &  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR FOR THE  
ABILENE TAYLOR COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT



# HEALTH EQUITY

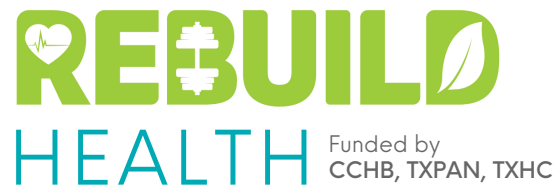
## WHAT IS IT & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Health equity is when all members of society enjoy a fair and just opportunity, having equal access to resources, to be as healthy as possible. As we take the month of February to recognize and reflect on the historical struggles of the Black community and celebrate how far they have come and accomplished, we are reminded of the inequities that still exist.



It is our goal and our desire to provide everyone with the opportunity to be as healthy as they can be and to eliminate barriers and health disparities. To ultimately achieve health equity, we are working on improving our understanding and appropriately addressing the needs of all populations culturally, linguistically, and environmentally, all the while ensuring health equity is integrated into all we do for a healthier and stronger Community. It will take time and hard work, but we will get there step by step.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEALTH EQUITY ONLINE AT  
[BIT.LY/HEALTHEQUITYLEARNMORE](https://bit.ly/healthequitylearnmore)



## DAILY HEART HEALTH

### WELLNESS GOALS TO PROMOTE HEART HEALTH

With heart disease as the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. it is important to consider lifestyle choices that help prevent heart disease and stroke every day. Here are a few ways to do your part each day to prioritize your heart health.

**Eat Healthier.** Foods high in saturated fat, trans fats, and cholesterol have been found to contribute to heart disease. By eating a balanced diet low in these, and high in fiber you can decrease your risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Be Active.** One of the most effective ways to strengthen your heart muscle is through physical activity. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of activity weekly - just as little as 30 minutes 5 days a week. Get up and get active!

**Manage Stress.** Stress management is not talked about enough. Negative mental health is shown to greatly increase heart disease risk. This can include depression, anxiety, and **chronic stress**. In addition to the negative effects these conditions have on a person's mental and physical well-being, they also attribute to an increase of poor health habits and behaviors such as smoking, overeating, lack of physical activity, etc. Managing your stress through healthy coping practices can decrease these negative effects on your well-being and decrease your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Heart disease and stroke have many contributing factors to be aware of, but through improvement in these areas you can build a strong foundation for improving your overall wellness.

It all comes down to the choices we make daily. By mindfully choosing nutritious foods, taking time to be active, and paying attention to and managing stress levels we choose every day to prioritize our health and our heart. Start by making small changes, each small change can equal big health benefits for your future.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEART HEALTH ONLINE AT  
[BIT.LY/HEARTHEALTHGOV](https://bit.ly/hearthealthgov)



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

During Winter, the risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning is higher. This is because CO is found in fumes produced by common items used during the winter months, such as stoves, fireplaces, gas ranges, generators and furnaces.



#### Symptoms to watch for

CO can be a silent killer because it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. It is important to have a functioning carbon monoxide detector, but it is also important to know the signs and symptoms to watch for.

Symptoms are often described as "flu-like". This includes headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. If you and others in your home begin showing similar symptoms this may be a clue that it is caused by an environmental factor such as CO.

#### How to prevent CO poisoning

- Install and regularly test CO detectors in your home. These detectors need to be replaced every 5 years (unless otherwise stated by the manufacturer).
- If you live in a rental property it is especially important to ensure the safety equipment in the unit is updated and functioning as you may not know the last time the equipment was tested, and appliances were serviced by a qualified technician.
- Don't misuse gas appliances in enclosed spaces. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows.
- Never use a cooking range or oven to heat your home.
- Only run your car in open air environments, especially not inside a closed garage.

#### Who is at risk from CO poisoning?

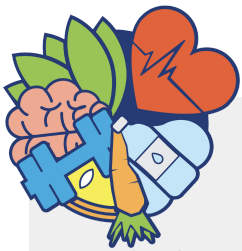
- **Everyone is at risk of CO poisoning.**
- Infants, the elderly, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia, or breathing problems are more likely to get sick from CO.
- Pets can also become sick from CO. This may present as lethargy when within the home.



#### If you suspect you have a leak...

stop using all appliances, switch them off, open doors and windows, and evacuate the property. *(This includes evacuating your pets as well)*

LEARN MORE ONLINE AT  
[WWW.CDC.GOV/CO](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/CO)



**Slice of Life**  
COALITION  
FUNDED BY TXHC

## LET'S HAVE A HEART TO HEART

### AMERICAN HEART MONTH

If you've ever watched "The Notebook" you'll recall the couple, Noah and Allie, who fall in love but become separated after a series of misunderstandings come between them. When they finally get on the same page, it is...well, that scene of the two kissing in the rain should clue you in. As this illustrates, misunderstanding your heart can lead to its own heartache.

Scientific data shows that the mortality rate for heart disease and stroke have sharply risen since COVID-19 began. Newly formed unhealthy behaviors such as consuming more unhealthy foods and alcoholic beverages can increase

one's risk for heart disease and stroke. So what are a few things one can watch out for to better understand if they're experiencing a heart attack or just a tad too much red wine and pizza?

- **Chest Pain.** A majority of heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes – or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain
- **Discomfort** in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- **Shortness of breath.** This can occur with or without chest discomfort

**So do yourself and loved ones a favor by knowing these signs and symptoms and when to call 911.**

(Source: National Center for Health Statistics) (Source: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org))

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **PREGNANCY RESOURCES CLASS SCHEDULE** - [FMI PRABILENE.COM/CLASSES/](http://FMI.PRABILENE.COM/CLASSES/)
- **YOUTH (MARCH 15) & ADULT (APRIL 1) MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID COURSE** - [FMI: BETTYHARDWICK.ORG/MHFA](http://FMI:BETTYHARDWICK.ORG/MHFA)
- **PUBLIC HEALTH DAY APRIL 14TH**

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